



Department Updates

April / May 2021

County Clerk

DeeAnn Cook County Clerk

Our February 16, 2021 Primary Election narrowed the field of Seven Superintendent of Public Instruction candidates down to two - Jill Underly and Deborah Kerr. They went head to head at the April 6 Spring Election. Kerr received the most votes in Barron County but Underly won the state. Another state level race was for Court of Appeals District 3 where the race was decided between Rick Cveykus and Gregory B. Gill, Jr. Gill won that race in Barron County and in the district. Absentee voting was significantly less than last year's elections when a record number of absentees were requested due to the pandemic. Voter turnout was fairly typical for a Spring Election.

7,520 votes were cast in the county which was approximately 26% of registered voters and 21% of eligible voters. There were several contested municipal and school boards races. Due to less than the maximum

amount of candidates filed in some municipal and school board seats, there was a higher than usual number of registered write in candidates. There were school referenda questions in the Barron School District and the Cumberland School District. Higher voter turnout was seen in those areas. Special thanks to Vonnie Ritchie, Sharon Millermon, Jeff and Pam French for volunteering their time helping Jess and I take in election results. Jeff Sirek again uploaded results remotely for us helping to make our process smooth. We were done taking in results and proofing by 10:15 PM which isn't bad considering the number of contests and the number of write in votes each polling place had to deal with.

Our current election equipment has served us very well, but it is nearing the end of its useful life. I am coordinating a vendor event and all vendors with election equipment that is approved by the State of Wisconsin will

be coming to demonstrate their equipment to our group of Municipal Clerks and their Deputy or Chief Inspector. Each vendor will be given a time slot to showcase their product and answer questions from the group. We will then decide which type of equipment best suits our needs and do a group purchase in order to get the best price. This is similar to the process we used back in 2005, the last time we purchased election equipment.

Foot traffic in the office continues to be quite low. Marriage license numbers are still down but we are looking forward to that picking up very soon! We will continue to use appointments for marriage licenses since it is working so well.

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Maintenance / Parks & Recreation

Steve Olson, Building Maintenance Director

With the early snow melt the departments are getting a good start on spring/summer work. The parks are all ready to open May 1. The winter was an easier one so the destruction from ice jacking was very minimal. With the parks done, crew has moved onto property line painting, forest road repair. Also the ranges are getting new targets. We are planting more apple trees around property owned by the county. Maint. Dept.

Yard work has begun. The spraying for broadleaf's is being done this week. Boiler systems are getting their yearly tear down and PM's. Cooling systems will be next for startups.

Building projects are ongoing. Aging remodel is complete. Auditorium is awaiting state approval. The JC fire alarm system plans are at the state also. The department will be replacing building controllers at the JC also. This is just an update in equipment. We will be replacing 5 of the main controllers for all the HVAC system.

Will be touring Anne Street School to see what upgrades are needed there. Will report later on findings. Maintenance Department is working/consulting with college on needs at the campus. Developing plan for those needs.

Child Support

Lynette Metcalf, Program Manager

The Child Support Window is now open to the public from 8:00am-4:30pm. Our staff continues rotating time in the office and working remotely. Child Support clients are still encouraged to call (715) 537-6390 or email our agency at childsupport@co.barron.wi.us to set up an appointment with their caseworker to ensure availability.

Child Support funding is based on performance guideline categories of Court Order Establishment, Paternity Establishment, Current Child Support Collections, and Arrears Collections. The graph below represents a comparison of the Barron County Child Support Agency current performance with the State of Wisconsin's FFY Target goal and the State of Wisconsin's FFY 2020 overall state performance.

	Barron County as of April 30, 2021	Wisconsin Target Rate at FFY End	Wisconsin FFY 2020
Court Order Establishment	94.47%	80%	100.11%
Paternity Establishment	102.46%	90%	86.21%
Current Child Support	78.92%	80%	74.10%
Arrears Collection	67.32%	80%	73.58%

The Barron County Child Support Agency was able to collect a total of \$1,408,337.60 in child support from February 1, 2021 through April 30, 2021 to support our client's families.

Child Support court hearings continue to be held via Zoom for our clients.

Aging & Disability Resource Center

Jennifer Jako, Director

The ADRC is a one-stop shop for information and resources for older adults, adults with disabilities, caregivers, and other community providers. We serve anyone regardless of income or assets and our services are free and confidential. You don't necessarily need to have an issue to talk with us, you may just be curious or have a question; our job is to help individuals and caregivers understand all the various resources and navigate decisions to stay healthy as we age and for those living with a disability.

Pandemic/Reopening update: We continue to follow our local Public Health recommendations when serving older adults in our community. With public health guidance and local data, we opened the ADRC office May 3rd for in person walk-ins, appointments and home visits. We will be opening in person support groups and healthy aging education workshops throughout June, and all Senior Dining locations the week of June 21st. Our customers will be provided with all the information they need to make an informed decision on whether or not in person services are right for them. We will still assist customers who prefer over the phone and virtually as well as provide curb side meal pick up to help meet everyone's needs.

Advocacy: Wisconsin's State Biennial Budget process is in full swing. State funding that ADRCs receive to operate has been stagnant since our existence in 2006. This results in insufficient funding to support increasing wages and fringe, along with increasing customer demand because of our growing aging population. Our network is advocating for an additional \$52.4 million of State GPR for ADRC funding in the next State Biennial Budget. Most counties passed a *Resolution Supporting Increased Funding for Aging and Disability Resource Centers* and sent on to Governor Evers's office. While the Governor's initial budget has not included all of this funding, it does include some funding for expansion of Dementia Care Specialist and Caregiver supports. The Joint Finance Committee completed their public hearings, where we continued advocacy to include full funding or "ADRC Reinvestment." Aging Advocacy Day in Wisconsin was held May 12th and we participated with others in our Senate district 25 and had the pleasure of informing Senator Bewley, Rep Armstrong, Rep Milroy and Rep Meyers of our top concerns and needs. We will now wait and see what budget Joint Finance Committee passes on to the Senate/Assembly and then on to the Governor. Other top priorities we advocated for include: improved funding for Elder Benefits Specialist, many family caregiver supports/recommendations from the Governor's taskforce on caregiving, infrastructure improvements for transportation, housing, and broadband, lowering healthcare costs like prescription drug costs and falls prevention, and full Medicaid expansion.

Aging Plan: Every three years we formally request community input to develop a new three-year plan for aging programs and services, which we call our "Aging Plan." The plan will outline milestones and goals for our staff and represents the county's intention to ensure older people have the opportunity to realize their full potential and to participate in all areas of community life. Once the plan is developed and approved by our policy-setting Commission on Aging (COA), it is submitted to one of our primary funders, the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources. We use this plan to help guide decisions and provide an annual update on our progress achieving the milestones and goals. We spent March, April and May gathering county-wide input with a survey; this provided anyone an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas about how to make Barron County a great place to age well. Because we are an aging county, our services are very important to the health of our entire community. Gathering input is the most important part of the plan. To date, we have received over 800 surveys with top needs trending: in home care/caregiver supports, dementia/brain health, understanding public and private benefits, transportation, and understanding technology. Our next steps will be reviewing the data, determining further input needed, presenting data to our board, and ultimately creating our goals and overall plan.

Respite Care Association of Wisconsin (RCAW) grant: Respite care is a special name for a short-term break for caregivers. When you look after someone who's sick or disabled, it's a 24-hour job. Temporary relief/respite can help caregivers care longer and prioritize their own health needs. Respite can be arranged for just a few hours, part of a day, a full day, or for several days. Care can be provided at home or at an adult day center. The ADRC is collaborating with RCWA to offer more in home respite resources. Our communities have a shortage of caregiver resources, including in home respite services – which was heard loud and clear in our Aging Plan survey data. We were awarded a grant to be used to help recruit respite providers to build RCWA's online registry. This resource benefits our ADRC because it is another resource to refer customers to when they are looking for respite services. The goal is to have 20 respite providers on the registry for Barron County. (We had 0 on the registry before our grant project was started). The more these providers are used, the more sustainable their service is, the more service we will have for our communities. In home care is a top need trending in community input, so this project definitely helps address this top need in all of our communities. If you want more information or know anyone interested in becoming a respite care provider and listed on this online registry, please contact our Caregiver Specialist Alisa Lammers at ex 6374. Additionally, we are looking at tentatively reopening our Daybreak adult day respite program in July and we know many caregivers are excited about this news.

COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach: We continue to collaborate with Public Health regarding vaccination information and access. Our ADRC was awarded funding from the State with the intent to outreach and link homebound individuals in our communities with a vaccine if they want one. We have determined to use these funds by: specialists linking homebound customers with vaccine information, reimbursement to any of our transportation providers in Barron, Rusk or Washburn counties (NCIL, CILWW, Heartland, Namekagon, AddLIFE, RCTC) that provide free or reduced cost rides to vaccine appointments to reduce that barrier, WEAU TV ad reaching homebound with information, WJMC radio spots, and we are considering direct mailings with vaccine information. Older adults and people living with a disability are the most vulnerable and may have the biggest access barriers, so the ADRC is vital in linking our customers with vaccine information and access.

If you or anyone you know needs any information about our services or needs help planning for the future, please call at 715-537-6225, email staff, or check out our website at www.adrcconnections.org, or like us on Facebook @ADRCBarron.